DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 554 FL 005 096

AUTHOR Smith, Alfred N.
TITLE Pre-Service Teacher Training in Individualization.
PUB DATE [73]
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the ACTFL Annual Meeting (Boston, Massachusetts, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Guides; *Individualized Instruction; Individualized Programs; *Language Instruction; Methods Courses; *Modern Languages; Performance Based Teacher Education; *Teacher Education; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The preservice foreign language teacher training program in the individualization of instruction at Utah State University incorporates several components: (1) systems of accountability and mastery learning, which consist of rigorous systems of quality control; (2) personalized curricula through the expansion of the elective phase of the programs; (3) more individualized courses in areas of specialization as well as in specific teacher education courses, which demonstrate to the prospective teacher the process of individualization; (4) earlier and more extensive experiences in individualization, such as programs in which the students can serve as tutors, as well as those individualized programs in the language department itself. The language department at Utah State has a preservice training system in which many of the foreign language teaching majors and minors receive training in the process of individualized instruction. The students are recruited, trained, supervised, and evaluated as assistants in the teaching of language classes, working predominantly with other students who are experienced senior aides. As assistants, they participate in the actual teaching situation, and thus are individually learning to teach, rather than being told how to teach. (LG)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Smith - Utah State University

ED 094554

# PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING IN INDIVIDUALIZATION

There are a number of opportunities at most universities for prospective FL teachers to obtain adequate pre-service training in the individualization of instruction other than in the methods course. There has been a recent effort at most universities to incorporate more of the following components of individualization intothe training aspect itself: (1) systems of accountability and mastery learning, (2) personalized curricula to meet needs and interests of prospective teachers, (3) more individualized courses in areas of specialization as well as specific teacher-education courses, and (4) earlier and more extensive field experiences in individualized programs.

Systems of accountability and mastery learning:

Many schools have adopted rigorous systems of accountability and quality control because of imposed quota systems and increasing pressures from higher boards and legislators. At USU, for example, we have developed an admissions system which consists of three phases, Entry, Foundations and Performance, with a decision made at the conclusion of each phase concerning the student's continuation in the teacher education program. These decisions are made according to results of students on performance based tests and in performance based courses, grades, recommendations, and GPA's. These criteria differ from department to department. Students are not rejected if they fail to meet the criteria, but are rather encouraged to make up their deficiences in order to continue in the program. In French, for example, we have a criterion-reference achievement test which all teaching majors must take before they enter the methods class. Students must obtain a certain score on this test in order to enter the performance phase in the teacher education program. Sometimes this means taking more courses in grammar and composition, to reach the expected level of competency. Most students have been grateful, few have complained, because I think that most people really do want to be competent.

Personalized curricula:

Many universities and schools of education have lifted the tight restrictions of required courses and have begun to institute more personalized curricula, by expanding the elective phase of their programs or offering more options. At USU the general education requirement is stated simply in terms of a required number of hours which

FL 005 096

may be met by taking any of the great variety of courses on the approved list as long as they are not in the student's major or minor. Bob Lafayette sent me an outline of several Education courses at IU which are set up on a modular basis. In one of the courses, for example, students must select one 3-week module and two 6-week modules. There are 7 choices in the 3-week modules and 6 choices in the 6-week modules, clearly an effort to respond to individual needs and interests.

More individualized courses in areas of specialization as well as in specific teacher-education courses:

Many of the students who come up through the ranks of our lower division program have participated as students in the process of individualized learning. Of course, this is the best kind of training anyone can have in ~~the way manner that~~ how such a program operates. These students often become our best assistants later on because of the primary exposure they have had as students in the program. Many educators have begun to recognize the effectiveness of "training to individualize by being individually trained." Birkmaier put it this way: "The prospective teacher certainly should be exposed to individualized instruction in his own acquisition of a FL and culture as well as in the acquisition of his general and professional education. To learn "how to do" will never compensate for learning "to do by doing." That is the challenge to the trainers of teacher trainers as well as to the trainers of teachers." (p. 134, Proceedings of the Stanford Conference.)

Earlier and more extensive experiences in individualized programs:

There are field experiences in the foundations courses in Education which frequently allow students to serve as tutors and assist in the individualized foreign language programs (when they exist) of the local schools. There are September and pre-methods field experiences and student teaching which give students contact with, and training in individualization. However, the most extensive pre-service training available to our prospective foreign language teachers at USU is in the individualized program in the language department itself. I would like to devote the remaining 8-10 minutes of my presentation to a description of the kind of pre-service training we provide. I think that a description of our system will be of value, since similar systems ~~xxx~~ could be developed to provide training in the following ways as well: (1) an on-going student-aide program between individualized programs in the secondary schools and teacher training programs in the univer-

sities (which has, in fact been the case, in the FL teacher training program at BYU) and (2) an on-going student-aide program between individualized programs in academic departments and courses in the School of Education.

At Utah State we have a completely individualized option in our lower division program in all languages. This individualized set-up has provided an excellent laboratory situation in which many of the foreign language teaching majors and minors receive training in the process of individualized instruction. Each language uses from 10-15 student aides per quarter to assist in the individualized program. This number is needed to have at least 2 student assistants on duty each hour during the day in the laboratory and adjoining class rooms and office areas where individualized activities take place. The majority of these student aides are undergraduate majors and minors who receive credit for the duties they perform.

I would first like to describe how these students are recruited, how they are trained and oriented for their jobs, and how they are supervised and evaluated. Then I would like to outline briefly the kind of work they do and the most significant learnings they derive from their participation in our program. Finally I would like to indicate how the students themselves feel about this training by reading some responses to a recent questionnaire which they filled out.

Recruitement:

We recommend that all teaching majors and minors work at least one quarter in the individualized program.. Some do much more than

that. During preregistration advisors send students who have extra hours available to the heads of the individualized sections who make out the work schedules. Professors of upper division classes are also asked to announce during pre-registration that majors or minors interested in earning credit by assisting in the individualized program contact the section heads.

Orientation and Training for the Job:

In general, orientation is conducted by senior assistants (upper division students) who have had a quarter or more experience on the job. They show the new assistants around the learning laboratory. They show them where packets, tests, answer sheets and student folders are filed. They explain and demonstrate techniques for conducting drills and conversational activities, for providing tutorial help and for administering tests. The new aides are also given instructions on procedures for checking off activities and recording test results in student folders. There is also a weekly seminar which all assistants are required to attend. Although the first few seminars of the quarter are devoted to inservice training and additional orientation, these meetings are usually reserved to treat and resolve problems that arise from week to week.

All assistants are required to attend the first few class meetings of the individualized sections to be introduced to the students with whom they'll be working. Assistants also wear name tags for the first few weeks of the quarter until students are acquainted with them.

Job Description

Our assistants do everything from conducting small group conversation activities to grading workbook exercises. During the hour that the assistant is on duty he or she may administer a number of paper and pencil tests, monitor these students while conducting an oral drill, be asked to give a grammatical presentation from a learning packet and conduct a generalization, clarify a point of confusion for a bewildered student or explain a vocabulary word in a reading passage. He may be working with a first quarter beginning student one minute and a third quarter intermediate student the next. He may have 5 or 10 minutes of serenity when he can grade papers and file folders and tests.

Supervision and Evaluation:

We try to arrange the schedule so that all cadet assistants work their first quarter with experienced senior aides. In this way they learn the ropes quickly and are closely supervised. It is an apprenticeship arrangement run almost entirely by the students themselves. In the beginning when we first started the program, professors worked along with the student assistants explaining their duties and supervising their performance. Now our experienced assistants do most of the training and supervision in conjunction with frequent visits by professors and the weekly seminar. We feel as though we have come a long way in achieving a system of participator leadership (as Birkmaier calls it) where "independence from the chief is combined with frequent contact with him." The competence and efficiency of our assistants have improved noticeably since we began sharing the responsibilities of leadership.

We have tried our best to encourage a feeling of professionalism in our assistants. We evaluate them much the same way we evaluate the students in our individualized classes. They do the work and perform at a level of competence we deem acceptable to earn the credit with a grade of A. If they are not on the job when they're supposed to be and if they're not performing as they should, then there is no grade and no credit until they've fulfilled their contracts. An assistant who doesn't show up for work or is unable to perform his duties in spite of additional help and remedial training is usually dismissed. We try to instill in the assistants a feeling of pride in the importance of their contribution to our program. They realize that the individualized process relies heavily on their involvement for its success, and they take their responsibilities very seriously.

Significant Learnings:

The following comments were made by our assistants in response to a question on a recent evaluation they completed during the weekly seminar session. The question reads:

"What are the most valuable learnings you think you have derived from your participation as an assistant in the individualized program?"

1. [I've gained experience in giving oral tests - to be precise with pronunciation, and to speak at a rate the student can understand and follow.] Reviewing and correcting tests has made me remember verb forms, etc. I'd forgotten.

2 [First, my language improves as I speak it. My confidence, also. Explaining grammar has caused me to not only study harder but I am surprized how much better I understand it after I have explained it to someone else.]

3. I find that I work a lot harder to learn the specifics of the language when I have to teach it. [It has also helped me formulate ways of explaining the problems that arise. I'm learning how to react with students and to spot trouble spots before they become a real problem. Also, I'm meeting many people and I get a kick out of it.]

4. [3 areas have been significantly benefted by participation: 1. knowledge of the language. 2. knowledge of language teaching methods and procedures. 3. self. Skip 1 Read 2+3

[2. As a student, I was aware primarily of the problems I experienced in language learning, that is my view of the language and its learning was centered upon my own needs. Working as an assistant, I experienced the problems of others. I see the teaching process at work from the ground level up and learn as a result of personal contact with students at varying levels and abilities, the problems inherent in language teaching and learning. Also, I am experiencing the use of various teaching methods from the side of the teacher whereas, while a student in beginning language, I merely benefitted or suffered the effects of the methods. Now I understand them and use them.

3. As Emerson stressed, the importance of learning is a basis for self-development which might be applied by the <u>individual</u> in his own original way toward the benefit of general knowledge. In this program, the assistants, being left mostly on their own apply their knowledge in their own creative and perhaps unique way, thereby functioning as thinking individuals rather than merely parroting classroom traditions. This is invaluable. Personally, I am learning to <u>use</u> my college education, am learning to communicate professionally with others, and am developing professinnal character and patience. It is also rather nice to help others.]